

WE CLAIM:

1. In combination with a whirlpool bathtub, said
whirlpool bathtub having a tub, the tub having an inside
surface, a closed loop plumbing system, a housing assembly
5 component, a water pump and an output jet, a suction and
purification device comprising:

a porous faceplate having a chemical dispenser; and
wherein said chemical dispenser is in axial alignment
with said faceplate and located adjacent to a
10 front surface of said faceplate.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said chemical
dispenser is insertable into said housing assembly component
of said tub.

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3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein said chemical
dispenser is further located adjacent to an inlet orifice of
said housing assembly component after insertion.

20 4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said suction and
purification device further comprises means functioning to
inhibit a suction force caused by said pump if said
faceplate is missing or if said faceplate is improperly
attached to said housing assembly component.

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5. The apparatus of claim 1, said suction and purification device further comprising means functioning to filter debris.

5 6. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein said suction and purification device further comprises means functioning to inhibit a suction force caused by said pump if said filter means is missing or if said filter means is improperly inserted into said housing assembly component.

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7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said suction and purification device has one or more chemical dispensers.

15 8. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said faceplate further comprises a pop off design, whereby a tool is not required to remove it.

20 9. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said faceplate has one or more rearwardly extending members for positioning the faceplate when initially inserted into said housing assembly component.

10. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said chemical dispenser has a length of less than about 8 inches.

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11. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said chemical dispenser has a diameter of less than about 2 inches.

12. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said chemical dispenser further comprises one or more openings to release a metered dose of said chemical housed therein into said
5 water.

13. In combination with a whirlpool bathtub, said whirlpool bathtub having a tub, the tub having an inside surface, a closed loop plumbing system, a housing assembly
10 component, a water pump and an output jet, a suction and purification device comprising:

a faceplate means functioning to filter substantially large debris from entering said closed loop plumbing system;
15 said faceplate means having a dispensing means, said dispensing means functioning to discharge antimicrobial chemicals into said closed loop plumbing system; and wherein said dispensing means is in axial alignment
20 with said faceplate means and located adjacent to a front surface of said faceplate means.

14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein said dispensing means is insertable into said housing assembly component of
25 said tub.

15. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein said dispensing means is further located adjacent to an inlet orifice of said housing assembly component after insertion.

5 16. A method of retrofitting a below-the-waterline suction device having a faceplate, said method comprising the steps of:

removing said faceplate;
providing a chemical dispenser;
10 attaching said chemical dispenser to a component of said suction device; and
installing a retrofit faceplate on said suction device.

15 17. A method of retrofitting a below-the-waterline suction device having a faceplate, said method comprising the steps of:

removing said faceplate;
providing a retrofit faceplate having a chemical 20 dispenser located rearward of a front surface of said retrofit faceplate and in axially alignment with said retrofit faceplate; and
installing said retrofit faceplate on said suction device.

25 18. In combination with a whirlpool bathtub, said whirlpool bathtub having a tub, the tub having an inside

surface, a closed loop plumbing system, a housing assembly component, a water pump and output jets, a suction and purification device comprising:

a porous faceplate having a chemical dispenser;

5 wherein said chemical dispenser is in axial alignment with said faceplate and located adjacent to a front surface of said faceplate; said chemical dispenser housing a chemical; and wherein said chemical dispenser has one or more 10 openings to release said chemical into a suction line of said closed loop plumbing system when contacted with water.

19. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein said one or more 15 openings may vary in size, configuration, and location.

20. A method of replenishing a chemical in a below-the-waterline suction device for a whirlpool bathtub having a faceplate and a chemical dispenser that houses the chemical, said chemical dispenser located rearward of a front surface of faceplate and adjacent to an input orifice of a suction device housing, said method comprising the steps of:

removing said chemical dispenser from said suction 25 device; refilling the chemical dispenser with said chemical; and

reinstalling the chemical dispenser in said suction device.

21. A method of replenishing a chemical in a below-the-
5 waterline suction device for a whirlpool bathtub having a faceplate and a chemical dispenser that houses the chemical, said chemical dispenser located rearward of a front surface of faceplate and adjacent to an input orifice of a suction device housing, said method comprising the
10 steps of:

removing said chemical dispenser from said suction device;

replacing the chemical dispenser with a new chemical dispenser; and

15 reinstalling said new chemical dispenser in said suction device.

22. A method of replenishing a chemical in a below-the-waterline suction device for a whirlpool bathtub having
20 a faceplate and a chemical dispenser that houses the chemical, said chemical dispenser located rearward of a front surface of faceplate and adjacent to an input orifice of a suction device housing, said method comprising the step of replacing said chemical in said chemical dispenser
25 without removing said chemical dispenser.

23. A method to reduce bacteria growth in a whirlpool bathtub, the method comprising the steps of:

forming a faceplate to intake circulating bath water;
locating a chemical chamber adjacent the faceplate;

5 and

filling the chemical chamber with an antimicrobial agent.

24. The method of claim 23, further comprising the
10 step of placing the chemical chamber in axial alignment
with the faceplate.

25. A faceplate comprising:

a mount for a suction fitting;
15 an axially aligned chemical chamber located rearward
and adjacent to said faceplate;
said chemical chamber having a chemical that releases
and mixes with water that is directly induced
into the suction fitting; and
20 wherein said chemical inhibits bacteria growth.